Mr. Speaker, I rise in support

of the Darfur Peace and Accountability

Act, and urge my colleagues to join me in voting

yes on this important piece of legislation.

I commend Chairman HYDE and my fellow

New Jerseyans, African Subcommittee Chairman

CHRIS SMITH and Ranking Member DONALD

PAYNE for bringing this bill to the floor and

helping keep our focus on the terrible crisis in

Darfur and humanitarian needs in Sudan.

Three years ago, the people of Sudan

began a bloody civil war, with two rebel

groups in the South rising up against the government

in Khartoum. The response from the

Sudanese government was swift and brutal,

and its aerial bombardment and support of the

criminal militia known as the Janjaweed continues

today throughout the country. But what

has been done in the Southern region of

Darfur is beyond anything we have seen in

many years.

Mr. Speaker, it was not lightly that Congress

declared the situation in Darfur a genocide on

July 22, 2004. The government and its

Janjaweed allies have killed hundreds of thousands

of its non-Arab citizens in the region,

and this genocide continues unabated today.

More than two million civilians have been displaced

from their homes, over 100,000 fleeing

to neighboring Chad, and these refugees live

in the most difficult situations, still surrounded

by Janjaweed abusers and fearful for their

safety. Rape has been widespread, and as the

Janjaweed move across the region they leave

a path of destruction that makes living nearly

impossible for the few survivors left behind.

The military of the African Union, now 7,000

strong in Sudan, is doing valiant work but has

never received adequate support. The recent

discussions with NATO and the United Nations

to bring additional forces and military

material to the peacekeeping and stabilization

mission are promising, but are not enough.

The bill under consideration today would authorize

much needed assistance to the African

Union Mission in Sudan, and direct the President

to support the expansion of this force to

strengthen their work to bring peace to the region.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a cosponsor

of this bill, which lends significant support to

ongoing efforts to end the crisis in Darfur. The

bill supports the use of sanctions on the government

of Sudan to pressure it to end its

support for the Janjaweed and return to the

negotiating table. Only through strong U.S. involvement

will there be an end to the violence

in Darfur, and this bill provides the backing the

administration needs to take further action.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the

American people are in firm support of the

U.S. taking action on Darfur, and are strongly

moved by this tragedy, which some have likened

to the Holocaust. In my own district, a

wide range of faith communities have joined

together in the South Jersey Interfaith Coalition

to Save Darfur. I am proud to be an honorary

co-chair of this group which brings together

people from southern New Jersey to

take action on this issue. I am also proud of

the students of Voorhees Middle School, who,

with the help of their teacher Joyce Laurella,

organized ‘‘Project: Save Darfur,’’ which has

raised awareness of the crisis as well as

money for UNICEF activities in Sudan. Individual

action can make a difference, and the

U.S. government should join its citizens in mobilizing

on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence in this

matter, which grows more dire every day. We

cannot stand idly by, as we did in the face of

the genocide in Rwanda and in the early

stages of the Nazi holocaust, and then report

sadly from the gravesites of those who died.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote yes on

the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, and

support these steps to end the genocide.